

## IN THE MIDDLE: Barker Students Motivated by STEM Challenges By Parker Gouge

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In Michigan City, one middle school stands out for its work in STEM, which consists of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics: Barker Middle School.

To make students more excited about STEM, Barker's staff generates challenges with rewards for the victor(s). These challenges are to motivate us and to help show us how fun and interesting STEM can be.



I spoke with Mrs. Hamann, the Curriculum Coach at Barker, who provided me with some information on STEM challenges at our school.

Working in homeroom teams, our students have been challenged to come up with designs for water bottle rockets and paper airplanes. We have also figured out how to protect a raw egg dropped from the top of the gym bleachers, using only a limited number of items.

We have enjoyed researching designs, brainstorming ideas, and making entries for these STEM challenges. It is always exciting to see which

teams can shoot rockets the highest, fly planes the longest distance, and keep eggs from breaking.

Prior to becoming the Curriculum Coach, Mrs. Hamann was the eighth-grade Science teacher, and focused on things related to her primary job as a teacher, such as grading papers and setting up the lesson for the next day. However, considering she is now the Curriculum Coach, she can focus on planning challenges like these, along with other special STEM events.

She also gave me some insight on what challenges we might face in February, March and April. The talented Mrs. Hamann said that she is now going to arrange to revisit all of the challenges we have done previously to see if there has been any advancement in the students' creativity and engineering potential.

Barker students can thank Mrs. Hamann for all she's done for us, and the education and fun she has provided to make our futures brighter.

***Parker Gouge is a student at Barker Middle School. In the Middle is a regular column which is produced by middle school students in the Michigan City Area Schools.***